Message Text

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46
ACTION EUR-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6446
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF
AMCONSUL MUNICH

UNCLAS FRANKFURT 8893

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, GW
SUBJ: KOHL CALLS FOR CDU/CSU UNITY, BUT NOT AT ANY PRICE

1. SUMMARY: AT LAST WEEKS RHEINLAND-PFALZ CDU CONVENTION, CDU
CHAIRMAN HELMUT KOHL PUT THE CSU ON NOTICE THAT IT WILL HAVE TO
DECIDE SOON ON COOPERATION WITH THE CDU OR RISK A CDU INVASION OF
BAVARIA. THE CSU WILL NOT HAVE THE LUXURY OF WAITING UNTIL AFTER
THE 1978 BAVARIAN LANDTAG ELECTION, NOR SHOULD IT MISTAKE KOHL'S
WILLINGNESS TO COMPROMISE FOR PERSONAL WEAKNESS. HE AND OTHER
SPEAKERS STRESSED THE NEED FOR THE UNION PARTIES TO MAINTAIN
SOLIDARITY AND FOR THE CDU TO REMAIN FAITHFUL TO THE MIDDLE-OF-
THE-ROAD APPROACH THAT HAS WON IT SO MUCH POPULAR SUPPORT.
END SUMMARY

2. RHEINLAND-PFALZ CDU CONVENTION AT LAHNSTEIN, DEC 3-4,
PROVIDED CDU CHAIRMAN HELMUT KOHL A FRIENDLY HOME-BASE
AUDIENCE FOR HIS VIEWS ON RELATIONS WITH THE CSU AND ON THE
MOST EFFICACIOUS COURSE FOR THE UNION PARTIES TO TAKE IN THE
FUTURE. THAT HE STRUCK THE RIGHT NOTE WAS INDICATED WHEN
THE AUDIENCE INTERRUPTED HIS 90-MINUTE ADDRESS SOME 63 TIMES
WITH SOMETIMES PROLONGED APPLAUSE AND GAVE HIM A LONG STAND-
ING OVATION AT THE END.

3. KOHL REPEATED THE COMENTS MADE AT THE CDU CONVENTION ON
NOV 27 (DUSSELDORFS 76A-177), BUT WITH SUFFICIENT FORCE
TO CONVEY THAT HIS PATIENCE IS NOT UNLIMITED AND IT IS UP
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TO THE CSU TO JOIN WITH THE CDU IN HEALING THE RIFT. HE

REPEATED HIS DEMAND FOR UNIFICATION OF THE CDU AND CSU BUNDESTAG FACTIONS IF CREDIBILITY WITH THE VOTERS IS TO BE SUSTAINED, AND HE DECLARED THAT THE CDU WOULD COOPERATE WHOLEHEARTEDLY IN ACHIEVING THIS END. HOWEVER, HOHL DECLARED THAT UNITY WOULD NOT BE SOUGHT AT ALL COSTS; HE COULD NO LONGER ACCEPT CSU DENIGRATION OF THE CDU AND ITS LEADERS, AND WILLINGNESS TO WORK WITH THE CSU SHOULD NOT BE MISTAKEN FOR WEAKNESS ON HIS PART. NOR, KOHL DECLARED, WOULD THE CDU BE FRIGHTENED BY CONTINOUS CSU THREATS TO ESTABLISH A FOURTH PARTY. IF THE CSU DID NOT SHORTLY ABJURE INTEREST IN ESTABLISHING ITSELF OUTSIDE BAVARIA, THE CDU WOULD BE PREPARED TO MOVE INTO THE CSU'S HOME TURF. THIS AND OTHER ISSUES BETWEEN THE UNION PARTIES WILL HAVE TO BE SETTLED SHORTLY; THE CDU WILL NOT WAIT UNTIL AFTER THE 1978 BAVARIAN LANDTAG ELECTIONS.

4. MORE IN SORROW THAN ANGER, KOHL NOTED THAT THE CSU DECISION TO DISSOLVE THE JOINT BUNDESTAG FACTION WOULD BRING LONG-RANGE CHANGES IN THE PARTY STRUCTURE IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC AND THE CDU AND CSU WOULD EVENTUALLY BECOME RIVALS. POLITICAL PARTY FRAGMENTATION A LA WEIMAR AND A WEAKENED GERMANY WOULD BE THE END RESULT. HOHL DECLARED THAT THE CDU AND CSU MUST REMAIN THE PARTIES OF THE MIDDLE, THE FREE ALTERNATIVES TO SOCIALISM NOT ONLY IN GERMANY BUT IN EUROPE, AND HE ASSERTED THAT NO VOTES COULD BE WON FROM THE FRINGES AT EITHER END OF THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM. KOHL SHARPLY ATTACKED THE FEDERAL SPD/FDP COLAITION, WHICH HE SAID WAS BASED ON WEAKNESS, AND STRESSED THAT THE FDP IS AS MUCH A POLITICAL OPPONENT AS THE CDU AND THE SPD.

5. IN OTHER ADDRESSES, NEW RHEINLAND-PFALZ MIINISTER-PRESIDENT BERNARD VOGEL AND RHEINLAND CDU CHAIRMAN HEINRICH KOEPPLER STRUCK THE SAME BASIC THEMES. FRESH FROM THE RHEINLAND CDU CONVENTION, KOEPPLER APPEALED TO THE CSU TO DEMONSTRATE SOLIDARITY AND UNITY WITH THE CDU IN SUPPORT OF KOHL. HE STRESSED THAT THE CDU MUST REMAIN FAITHFUL TO THE PRORAMS WHICH HAVE MADE IT THE "PEOPLES PARTY".

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6. THE ONLY OTHER SIGNIFICANT BUSINESS WAS THE ADOPTION, WITH ONLY FOUR ABSTENTIONS, OF A RESOLUTION CALLING ON THE MEMBERS OF THE CSU BUNDESTAG FACTION TO REVIEW THEIR DECISION AND TO RESTORE THE UNITY OF THE TWO PARTIES.   LEHMANN

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